DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 721 EC 042 233

TITLE	Educating Deaf Children: The Total Approach.
INSTITUTION	Santa Ana Unified School District, Calif.
PUB DATE	71
NOTE	21p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Aurally Handicapped; Communication Skills; *Educational Programs; Elementary School Students; *Exceptional Child Education; Language Development; *Manual Communication; *Oral Communication; Preschool Children; Program Descriptions; Speech Skills

ABSTRACT

The use of total communication in educating deaf preschool and elementary school students in the Santa Ana Program for the Hearing Impaired, Orange County, California, is described. Total communication is explained to consist of auditory training, speech, speechreading, fingerspelling, and the language of signs. Aspects of the program described are parent preparation and instruction in total communication, the large number of visitors to the school, the most common question asked by visitors, activities over the last 3 years involving both hearing and hearing impaired children, achievement tests, teacher reaction to total communication, reaction of parents of hearing children involved in the program, psychological reactions of hearing impaired children to total communication, and the principal's observations on the program. The program is thought to be highly successful by all those involved. (CB)

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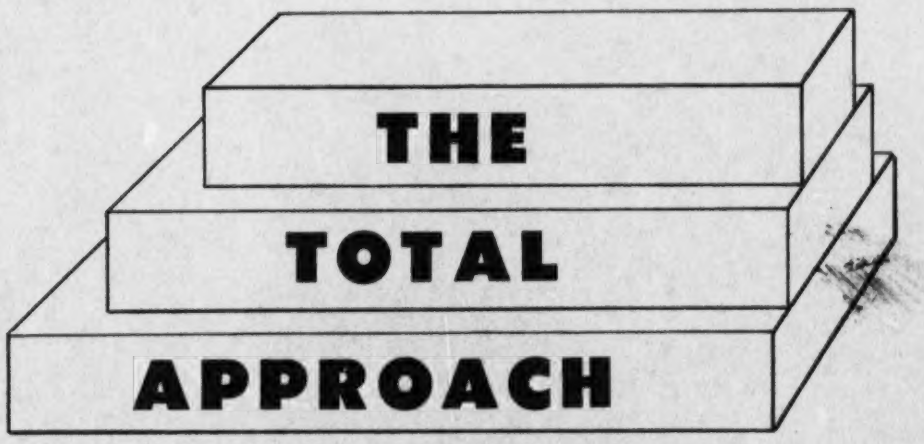
EDITING

DEAF CHILDREN



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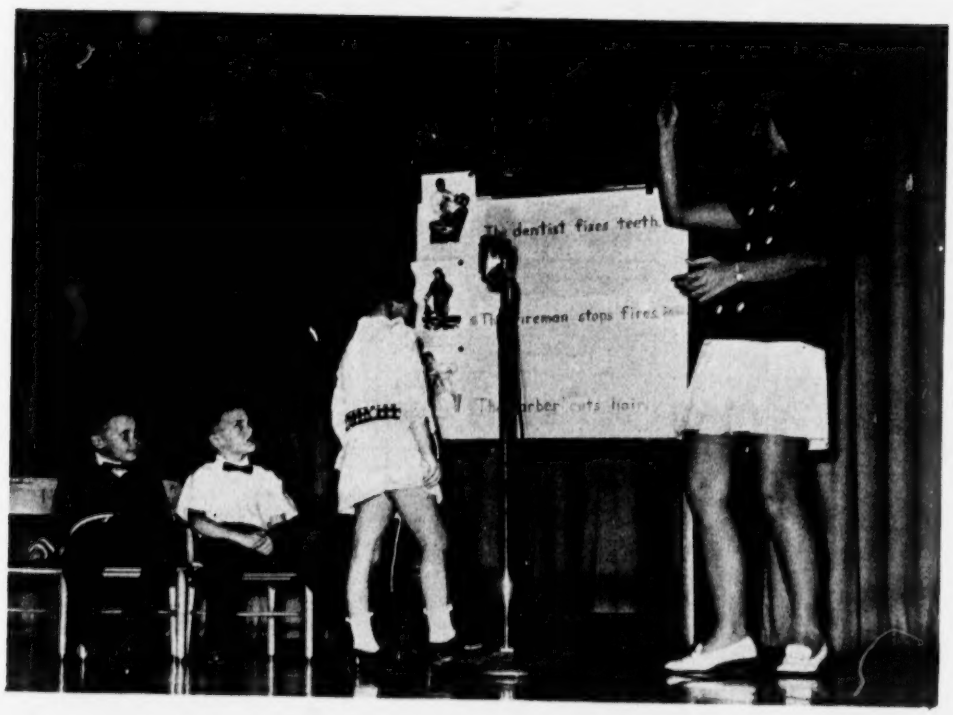
The dentist fixes teeth
The fireman stops fires
The barber cuts hair

EDUCATING
DEAF CHILDREN
by
TOTAL COMMUNICATION

Prepared
by the Staff of the Hearing Impaired Program, Santa Ana, California.

(Paper given at the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf at Little Rock, Arkansas, June 30, 1971)

On September 19, 1968, the Santa Ana Register gave a whole page to a new program for teaching the deaf located within the city. The headline of this article was "New Program May Shatter Tradition in Teaching Deaf." Since the write-up in the Santa Ana Register, there have been a number of other sources giving recognition to the Santa Ana District for originating the Total Approach and/or the Total Communication movements in America. Some of these sources follow:

Jim Cooper, CBS Television, Fall, 1968.

Milt Brouhard, The Los Angeles Times, November 17, 1968, Section L, Pages 1, 14-16.

The Deaf American, (Indianapolis, Indiana), April 1969, Pages 9-11.

Donald P. Moores, Education of the Deaf in the United States. University of Minnesota. November 1970, Page 31.

The Deaf American, Volume 23, No. 6, February 1971, Page 34.

The Deaf Spectrum, (Beaverton, Oregon) April 1971. Volume 2, No. 4, Page 13.

The Endeavor, (Washington, D.C.) Volume 2, Spring 1971, Page 1.

The new program has also been explained during several television appearance, in two documentary films, and at numerous speaking engagements. Perhaps it is in order at this time for the Santa Ana story to be told more fully. Not only the Santa Ana story, but the results of the three years of instructing deaf children via the Total Approach since an ever increasing number of people are requesting the same. First a few words about the education of the deaf prior to the Total approach.

The education of the deaf in America for pre-school and elementary children has been strictly oral, without exception, for many years. Contrary to public opinion, the residential and state schools have been as oral or more so for pre-school and elementary school children than the day schools. Only in recent times have a few schools experimented with fingerspelling to be used along with speech and speechreading. No one has dared to teach the deaf as the great majority of the deaf themselves believe it should be done, i.e., using all means of communication and especially the language of signs. For many years, oral education has been the means of instruction despite the well known facts that:

1. Only a small percentage of the spoken word is visible on the lips.

2. After many years of training, the speech of the great majority of the deaf cannot be understood outside of the family or outside of the classroom.

3. Most deaf people use the language of signs in latter years and especially after they leave school.

4. Many research studies show that the language of signs does not hurt speech and speechreading.

5. Only five percent of the "graduates" of our schools achieve a tenth grade education or better. (Yet nearly all research shows that the deaf have normal intelligence.)

The Santa Ana Program for the Hearing Impaired is the oldest program of its kind in Orange County. It serves children from 3 through 12 years of age from 15 school districts, mostly in southern Orange County. The first teachers in the program were the Fitzgerald Sisters, one of whom invented the Fitzgerald Key elsewhere. The Santa Ana Program was established in 1948 as an oral program and attempted instruction wholly by oral means until 1968 when it changed to the Total Approach. The Total Approach is using everything and anything that will help the children here and now. Among the many factors which make up the Total Approach are the parents, the hearing children, the community, extra curricular activities, the curriculum, the teacher, and Total Communication. Total Communication is using all means of communication with the children, especially at the earliest possible age. Total Communication, as used in the Santa Ana Program, consists of auditory training, speech, speechreading,

fingerspelling, and the language of signs. The signs, as used in the Santa Ana Program, consist of combinations of old signs, S.E.E. (Seeing Essential English) signs, and new signs made up by the hearing impaired staff at the school. The new signs are made around the basic old signs, using the first letter of the world. For example, all signs referring to eat or food would be made at the side of the mouth using the first letter of the word. Some examples of these words would be eat, food, grocery, breakfast, lunch, dinner, supper, etc. Signs are made at the side of the mouth in order to reinforce and supplement speechreading. While all things used in the Total Approach are vital, Total Communication is basic. This is true because the deaf child must see what the hearing child hears if he is to have every opportunity to realize his potential for full growth.

During the summer of 1968, the Santa Ana Unified School District established a new position as area supervisor of its program for the hearing impaired. This position was offered to Mr. Roy K. Holcomb, then a member of the Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf at San Fernando Valley State College at Northridge, California. Mr. Holcomb, himself deaf, was a strong advocate of all means of communication for the deaf. Two of his most widely quoted sayings are "Communicate with the deaf in any way you can — stand on your head, if necessary," and the deaf need "everything and then some." The last slogan was adopted as his class' motto. Mr. Holcomb hit upon the terminologies "Total Approach" and "Total Communication" from a supermarket slogan advertising

Total Discounts. The plans for the Total Approach were written up in 1967 while Mr. Holcomb was a member of the staff at the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis. The plans were first discussed with Dr. Ray Jones and Dr. Lloyd Johns, faculty members of the Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf in 1968, before being put into operation at the start of the 1968-69 school year in Santa Ana.

The First Year

All of the parents and teachers were told prior to the opening of school that the Total Approach would be the new method of instruction for all classes and children in the Hearing Impaired Program. Two new teachers, both of whom were already familiar with Total Communication, instructed the other teachers prior to the opening of school. Classes in Total Communication were immediately set up for the parents, hearing children, and people in the community at large. The speech of all of the children was put on tape at the beginning. The children were given various achievement and other tests by which they could be evaluated. Testing has continued over the past three years.

Visitors

From the beginning, visitors from all over the country, Canada, and Europe have come to observe the program. These visitors have just about doubled each year. During the third year, 1970-71, it was a rare day when there were no visitors. Many of the visitors had heard of the program by word of mouth, while others had read about it in various publications or seen it on television. Many of the visitors were quick to point out that the children here seemed to be so much happier than in other schools that they had visited. Other comments made by visitors, who were educators and/or authorities on the education of the deaf, were:

1. There seemed to be a great deal of communication among the children themselves.

2. The children seemed to vocalize and attempt to talk more.

3. Many of the children were reading and learning beyond even what hearing children were doing at the same age level.

4. The teachers were (out of this world) especially dedicated to their jobs.

5. The hearing children integrated very well with the deaf children, especially those who knew Total Communication.

The Most Common Questions Asked by Visitors Were:

1. How was the Total Approach sold to the district, the parents, and to the teachers?

Mr. Howard Harrison, former Personnel Director and now Associate Superintendent, was the first person in Santa Ana to hear of the Total Approach. Mr. Harrison had worked with the program for the deaf previously. He saw merit in the new plan and offered Mr. Holcomb the opportunity to try it out in Santa Ana. However, before Mr. Holcomb took the job, he talked with the parents and gave them the opportunity to accept or reject the new method. The parents wanted it and the teachers went along with the parents and the district.

2. Does the language of signs hurt speech?

   Every indication is that it helps.

3. Do the parents of the hearing children object to their children learning the language of signs?

   No, they think it is wonderful. There has not been one complaint from the parents of the hearing children in three years.

Activities Over the Last Three Years

The last three years have been busy years for everyone involved with the Total Approach. These years have also been most exciting ones. Below we have listed a few of the many activities that have occurred.

1. A panel of 11 deaf adults opened the first meeting of the Santa Ana Guild for the Deaf during the 1968-69 school year. This was a milestone for the deaf being involved in the education of the deaf in the Santa Ana School District.

2. In 1968, two teletypes were installed at the school. One was placed in a class for deaf children and the other in a class for hearing children. Then, for the first time, the deaf and the hearing could communicate with each other via "wires." Much of the hearing world was brought to the deaf world via the teletypes.

3. Extra curricular activities were sponsored by volunteers from the community. Activities that the community have helped with are ballot, art, gymnastics, and Indian Guide. Others were used in classrooms to help the teachers as needed.

4. Integration with interpreting services were provided for the primary and elementary children going into classes with regular hearing children. All programs, movies, and television programs were interpreted for all children.

5. The Santa Ana Guild for the Deaf has two benefit shows. Nearly 1,000 people came the first year and nearly 2,000 the second year.

6. Large portions of both documentary films, "Never to Hear the Wind" and "Deaf Children" were filmed at the James Madison School.

7. Daily lessons for the pre-school and kindergarten children were sent home in the language of signs so that the parents could reinforce the children's learning even when they did not understand their speech.

8. Workshops on the Total Approach were sponsored for those from other schools requesting the same.

Testing*

All of the older children have been given achievement tests since the start of the new program. One noticeable observation of the testing program was that younger children were able to be tested each year. At the beginning, it was most difficult to test even the older children (10-12 year olds) as communication to explain the simplest directions was lacking. Below are the California Achievement Test results of the 10 oldest students:

Student	Age (1971)	1968	1969	1970	1971
A	12	1.5	1.6	3.6	3.9
B	12	3.2	3.7	3.9	5.0
C	9	---	1.1	1.4	1.9
D	9	---	1.1	1.4	2.0
E	13	1.7	1.8	3.4	3.4
F	12	3.5	3.6	4.0	5.2
G	12	1.7	1.8	3.7	3.9
H	9	---	1.4	2.3	4.3
I	8	---	---	1.9	3.1
J	11	4.4	4.8	5.6	6.5

* The reader should be aware that most studies show that the average deaf high school "graduate" only reaches a third grade reading level and a fifth grade overall achievement.

Three of the above children were Mexican-American where little or no English was spoken in the home. Another child was Korean. All except one child was born deaf. One of the Mexican-American children became deaf at five from spinal meningitis. The hearing loss of the children was mostly profound. The intelligence range of the children was mostly average. The child who scored highest had deaf parents and had used Total Communication since he was a baby.

While most of the older children have made progress over the last three years with the Total Approach, every indication is that the children who started out with the Total Approach from the very beginning will do even better. Psychologists state that some eighty percent of all learning takes place before a child is eight years of age. Taking this into account, the Total Approach gives very young children every opportunity to make it during their prime years of learning.

Last winter testing was conducted on the first class using the Total Approach from the beginning. The children were in their third year of school having started when they were 3 years of age. There were 6 children in the class, all of whom were 5 years of age at the beginning of this school year. The children were tested with the Stanford Achievement Test; Primary Battery, as distributed and scored by the Office of Demographic Studies at Gallaudet College. Results follow:

Student	Word Read.	Para. Mean.	Vocab.	Spell.	Arith.	Aver.
A	2.2	1.8	1.3	2.6	1.2	1.8
B	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.3
C	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.3
D	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.4
E	1.6	1.7	1.2	--*	1.2	1.4
F	1.6	1.5	1.4	2.1	1.2	1.5

* Child was upset. Did not attempt to test this part.

It is noted that the present performance of many of the other pre-school children in the classroom indicate that they should score as well or better than the first class above.

Teachers

There are 10 teachers on the staff in the program for the Hearing Impaired at the James Madison School. All of the teachers were trained to teach via the oral method. Most of the teachers have taught in oral programs around the country. Several of the teachers had strong speech backgrounds from various universities. The teachers made the statements below about the Total Approach as compared to the oral method alone:

1. It is more effective for teaching the abstract.

2. It is more effective for teaching vocabulary and language.

3. It promotes more communication between adults and children in greater depth.

4. It is more effective for teaching new concepts.

5. It cuts down on repetition.

6. It produces more positive attitude from the parents. It gives them something tangible to work with where they can see good results immediately.

7. The Total Approach is also more effective for holding the attention and the interest of the children.

8. It appears to be more effective in establishing teacher-pupil rapport and developing a cohesive class.

9. It allows for a broader and more detailed curriculum development.

10. It is more effective for encouraging feedback and participation from the children.

11. It is more effective for encouraging interaction and communication among the children.

12. It permits the deaf child to follow more closely the academic curriculum of his hearing peers.

13. It gives more support to the current theory of progressive inclusion by affording some opportunity for integration of the deaf child with the hearing world.

14. It helps children follow events surrounding them with understanding.

15. It decreases a completely "teacher oriented" atmosphere and lets the children "lead" each other.

16. The establishment of communication and mutual understanding reduces behavioral problems due to frustration, misunderstanding, and lack of understanding.

17. All children are given an education and are not penalized by lack of speechreading ability or intelligible speech.

Parents of the Deaf Children

During the past three years of the Total Approach not one parent has left the program because of it. During the spring of 1970 parents were given the option of sending their children to an oral program. Questionnaires were sent to the parents of all 46 children* then in the program. One hundred percent of the questionnaires were returned and one hundred percent of the parents chose the Total Approach over the oral program.

Parents of the Hearing Children

The parents of the hearing children in the program with the hearing impaired think it is just great that their children learn the language of signs. The parents have always given their permission for their children to play, attend special programs and affairs for the deaf, and to interact with the deaf children in numerous ways. During the past three years of the Total Approach in Santa Ana, there has not been a single complaint from a parent of hearing children in regard to the deaf children.

* Children were from 3 to 11 years of age. The great majority were under 6 years of age.

Hearing Children

If visitors should see children using the language of signs in the Santa Ana Program, they should not make hasty judgements and label these children as deaf. They may be hearing as there are a number of hearing children who can sign as well or better than the deaf children themselves. But, then, why not? The hearing children have a larger vocabulary as well as more and better language. In any case, at P.T.A. meetings, Christmas, Easter, benefits, and other times, hearing children join with the deaf children in singing songs, doing the pledge of allegiance, as well as other activities. Some of the hearing children have invited deaf children to church, outings, parties, and other social activities and have made them feel very comfortable by interpreting for them. With the Total Approach, deafness is no longer a thing unknown. One little hearing girl who had to move to another school out of the district wrote back and said that she did not like her new school because there were no deaf children there. Many of the hearing children have stated that when they grew up they were going to work with the deaf.

Speech

The speech of all deaf children has been put on tape every year since the beginning of the Total Approach. During the spring of 1971, the tapes were judged by two objective non-teacher evaluators who did not know the children intimately. These judges reported that the speech of all children except two showed improvement.

Speech reading (lipreading)

The speechreading skills of the children seem to have improved even more than the speech. The children now have so much more knowledge with which to understand speechreading. At least this seems to be the case in the classroom where the children can now understand many things even when the language of signs is absent.

Psychological

During the fall of 1970, Barbara Rossier, a Santa Ana Unified School District psychologist, after talking with authorities on the education of the deaf around the country via phone, devised an oral-total test by which to evaluate the children. Dr. Rossier retested the children again at the end of the school year. At this time, she is compiling the results of her testing.

Principal

Mr. Kenneth Pruitt was the principal of the school in the Santa Ana District which serves the hearing impaired children before the change to the Total Approach. He continues to serve in that capacity. Below follows a report of his:

> It has been my observation that since we have embarked on the Total Approach at Madison School, there has been a marked change for the better in the behavior of the deaf child. Before the Total Approach, deaf children were extremely physical in their behavior towards others. They were defensive and accusative. Their behavior, sometimes, was considered strange by hearing children. However, after the children had received instructions in sign language and

fingerspelling, they were able to communicate effectively with each other, thereby, changing their behavior to a more acceptable standard. Disciplinary problems all but disappeared. The hearing child was also provided with a means of communication if he desired to learn the sign language, which many chose to do. Along with this came many opportunities to integrate deaf students into the regular school and many friendships developed between deaf and hearing students. Friendships among the deaf children became more meaningful.

The reader will, no doubt, wish to know of some of the problems encountered in changing from an oral program to a Total Approach one. Below are listed a few of the most significant problems and how they were handled.

1. The first problem was to convince the parents that many of the things that they had heard in the past were misleading. Exposing the parents to deaf adults as well as to existing research in the field helped the parents tremendously to get a better understanding of deafness as such.

2. A second problem was to provide the parents with opportunities to learn Total Communication. Classes were set up for the parents on Thursday evenings. Books on the sign language were purchased for the school library. The lessons of the younger children in the sign language were sent home daily. Conferences were set up for the parents who wanted to know more about Total Communication.

3. A third problem was to take care of the many children who moved into the district for the Total Approach. At this time, we have one room with four classes in it. Fortunately, a new school is being built to enable the district to adequately serve all children in the future.

4. A fourth problem was to help the deaf and the hearing children live with each other in the best possible manner. Integrating both ways, i.e., deaf with the hearing and vice versa, has helped. Classes in Total Communication have helped both groups to understand and to live with one another better in every way. (See Principal's report for more on this.)

5. A fifth problem was how to handle the many visitors who came to see the program without having them interrupt the classes too much. This problem has still not been solved, but with our new school we hope to have some one-way windows.

The great majority of the deaf people in this country have long believed in teaching the deaf by any and all means that might be beneficial, i.e., a Total Approach. AFter evaluation of the three years of the Total Approach in Santa Ana, the results are most impressive. Every indication is that progress will be even better in the years ahead with the children who started out from the very beginning with the Total Approach.